

A
SERMON

Preach'd at the

Parish Church of *Wendover*,
694rd *14* *3*

IN THE

County of BUCKS,

On the 31st of December 1706.

The Day of

THANKSGIVING

FOR THE

Wonderful Successes of this Year.

By JOSIAH HORT, *Vicar of Wendover, and Chaplain to the Right Honorable the Earl of WHARTON.*

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A
SERMON

Preached at the

Parish Church of Wembury,

IN THE

County of BUCKINGHAM,

On the 11th of December 1790

The Day of

THANKSGIVING



Wonderful Successes of this Year

By JOSIAH HORT, Vicar of Wembury,
and Chaplain to the Right Honourable
the Earl of WHARFON.

TO RICHARD HAMPDEN
of Great Hampden in the Coun-
ty of Bucks, Esq;

S I R,

I Will not tell you in the Common Phrase of Dedications, that this Discourse comes to you for Protection; for this is an Age of free Thinking, and as good Sense needs no Protection, so the want of it can find none from the Greatest Names. If I had not thought it tolerably to the purpose, no Importunity should have prevail'd upon me to print it; for I do not understand that Complaisance of exposing confessed Imperfections and Weaknesses to all the World for the sake of Obliging an Importunate Friend. This Discourse having prov'd acceptable to the Hearers, I hope it may do some good to those that shall read it, which I take

to be reason enough for making it Publick. Your being Lord of the Mannor, as well as Representative in Parliament for the Burrough where 'twas preach'd, gives you a sort of Right to the Dedication of it; but my Design, of doing it, is to make a grateful Acknowledgment of your Favours, and to assure the World, as well as your Self, in how great Obligations I am, Sir,

Your most devoted

humble Servant,

J. HORT.

Pfal. cxlix. 6, 7, 8.

6 *Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two edged sword in their hand:*

7 *To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people;*

8 *To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron.*

THE Occasion of our meeting together upon this Day, is the most Glorious that has happen'd in this or the foregoing War: For we come to return Thanks to Almighty God not for One single Victory, but for a whole Series of Victories and Successes which have attended the Arms of the Queen and her Allies from the Beginning to the End of this Year. This has been a Campaign of Wonders, from that Early Battle at *Ramellies* to that of *Turin*. The Armies of our Enemies, tho' Superior in Number, and posted

to Advantage, have been attack'd, routed, and dissipated : Their strong Fortresses have been taken almost as soon as besieged : Their most Wealthy and Populous Towns and Cities have prevented the Conqueror, by giving up their Keys, and humbly craving Protection ; and Rich and Spacious Countries, both in *Flanders* and *Italy*, have been snatch'd out of the hands of Usurpers, and restor'd to their Rightful Sovereigns, in little less time than they could be travell'd over. In short, that which humanely speaking appear'd to be the Work of many Campaigns, has been perform'd in this One.

So that it far'd with us as it did with the *Jews*, of whom the *Psalmist* says, That when the Lord turn'd agen the Captivity of *Zion*, they were like them that *dream'd* ; we were surpriz'd and amaz'd at those wonderful Accounts that trod upon one anothers heels, they seem'd to be pleasing *Dreams* rather than *real Matters of Fact*.

We expected much indeed from the Wisdom and Piety of our Queen, from the Unanimity and Secrecy of her Councils, from the Ability of her Generals, and especially from the Good Providence of God favouring our Righteous Cause ; but Successes so great and so sudden, were beyond what the most Sanguine could flatter themselves to hope for ; and I dare say, beyond what the Enemies of the Queen and Government fear'd.

By these unexpected Events, we have a fair and inviting Prospect open'd to us of bringing the present

sent War to a speedy and prosperous Issue : We may now hope to see the Pride of *France* humbled, and its overflowing Ambition contracted into its proper Channel : The Ballance of *Europe* restor'd, and together with Peace, the Protestant Religion establish'd upon lasting Foundations. I say, we may hope to see these great and desirable Ends obtain'd, if we follow our Blow, and improve that happy Opportunity which the Providence of God has put into our hands.

When I consider'd these things, I could find no words that did more pertinently and fully express the Duty and Interest of this Nation, and that did better agree to the happy Occasion of this Solemn Day, than those I have read for my Text. Wherein,

1. We have our Duty laid before us, which is to pay our grateful Acknowledgments of Praise and Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the wonderful Successes he has given us against our Enemies this last Summer : This is contain'd in that first Clause of the Text, *Let the high praises of God be in their mouth.*

2. We have likewise both our Duty and Interest, as to the remaining measures that are to be taken by us ; which is to follow where the Providence of God leads us, to take hold of the opportunity it gives us of setting Bounds to the Tyranny and Ambition of our Enemy, and bringing the War to a speedy and happy conclusion, and perpetuating Peace to us and our Posterity. This is contain'd in those following Clauses of the Text, *And a two edged*

Sword in their hand, to bind their Kings, &c. Not to praise God for his pass'd Favours, would be very *wicked and ungrateful*; and to give over our Enterprizes for accomplishing those happy Ends which he encourages us to pursue, would be both *Wickedness and Folly*; so that if we would approve our *Virtue and our Wisdom*, we must at once have the *high Praises of God in our mouths*, and the *Sword in our hands*. I shall speak to each distinctly. And,

1. We have the unquestion'd Duty of this Day laid before us, which is to return our hearty Praise and Thanks to God, for giving us such wonderful Successes against our Enemies; for 'tis through *him* that we have done valiantly. 'Tis by his Help that we have Trodden down our Enemies 'Tis the *Lord of Hosts* that leads forth our Armies, and fights our Battles for us.

'Tis the usual Method of God's Providence, to suffer Events to follow the *Congruity* of Natural Causes and Agents; to succeed the *wisest Schemes* and *most probable Measures*; and indeed, should it not ordinarily fall out so, *Prudence and Diligence* would become useless and insignificant Virtues. But yet we see that God has not so far tied himself up to this Rule, as never to vary from it. Sometimes, as the wise Man observ'd, *the Race is not to the swift, nor the Battle to the strong*. Divine Providence has oft-times visibly interposed to put by the Agency of natural Causes, and defeat the most likely Measures, so that those Events come to pass that were least of all expected; Were it not for this over-ruling
Power

Power which God has reserv'd to himself as his sole Prerogative, the wisest Councils and the greatest Numbers would hardly ever fail of succeeding. There are many Instances of this kind in the Old Testament, especially in Relation to Victories and Defeats, and those great Events that concern Kingdoms and Governments: I do not speak of those that were *perfectly Miraculous*, by turning Nature out of its wonted Course, and causing it to run in a another Channel; but of such Events as were so visibly over-rul'd and brought about beyond all humane Expectations, that every one might plainly see the *Finger of God* in them. And when these are in Favour of a particular Society or Confederacy, *They* are in a particular manner bound to acknowledge such distinguishing Goodness of God towards them.

And I think it must be own'd, that the Successes which We and our Allies have had this last Campaign, were very *Providential*, and beyond what in humane Probability could have been expected. Tho' our Schemes were *wisely* laid, and we had no Reason to fear but that they would be as *faithfully* and *bravely* executed, yet I durst be bold to say, that neither our Statesmen nor Generals expected that they would succeed to that *extraordinary Degree* as we now see they have. Who could have thought of gaining so compleat a Victory as that at *Ramellies*, over an Army that presum'd so far upon their Superiority, that they design'd, *contrary to their usual Custom*, to attack us if we had not prevented them by attacking First? Or who could have thought, that not only the Siege of *Turin* should be rais'd, but that

that the *French* Army that cover'd it should be attack'd in their Trenches, and put to an inglorious Flight, by an Army that even after the Battle was inferior to it? Or who could have expected to see so many great Towns and Cities, so many rich Countries and Provinces abandon'd in a few Days, which cost many Years, besides a vast Expence of Blood and Treasure, to gain? Who could have thought that the Power of *France*, which, like a Deluge, had overflow'd the Territories of neighbouring Princes, and threatned all *Europe*, could have been straitned and contracted to such a degree as it is at present, in the Compass of one Summer? Certainly these Successes abundantly exceed our Schemes and Measures, and had a visible Hand of God in them. This is the *Lord's doing*, and should be *marvellous* in our Eyes. *Not unto us* therefore, not unto our Merits, *but to him be the Glory.*

This is no more than what we are taught by the Piety of our Queen, who in Her *Proclamation* has set us an Example of ascribing the Praise to God.

We do most Devoutly, and Thankfully, acknowledge, says she, the great Goodness and Mercy of Almighty God, who has bless'd the Arms of Us and our Allies with great and wonderful Successes this Year.

And this is that grateful piece of Religion and Devotion, which we are at this Time call'd upon by the Providence of God, and Her Royal Authority, to perform. And there are Two principal Ways in which we are bound to express this our Praise and Gratitude to Almighty God. The 1st.

1st. Is in the Publick Worship of God, for which this Day is set apart. The

2^d. Is in the following Course of our Lives.

1st. One principal Way of expressing our Gratitude to God for these his Favours, is by Assembling together to offer up our Praise and Thanksgiving, in the Form of Publick Worship. 'Tis fit that *Publick Blessings* should be followed with *Publick Acknowledgments*, and that when God has visibly appear'd in Favour of whole Nations and Societies, they should return him Thanks in Collected Bodies. There is a greater Solemnity in Publick and United Praise, than in Private and Separate: It better suits to such Occasions, and redounds more to the Glory and Honour of God. This is more especially and directly the Sense of the Exhortation in the Text; *Let the high Praises* of God be in their *Mouth*; intimating, that when a People has receiv'd great Mercies and Favours from God, their Hearts should be so full of *Love* and *Gratitude*, as to discharge it in Loud and United Thanksgivings; for 'tis natural for those Affections to break out and discover themselves in this manner. 'Tis the noblest Use of our *Tongues* to ascribe Glory and Praise to God, to shew forth his wondrous Works, and express our Thanks for his Goodness and Loving-kindness to us. The Holy Psalmist is every where exciting Good Men to be frequent in this joyful Piece of Devotion; and compos'd a great many Psalms to be set by the Masters of Musick, for the Use of the Temple; and for

for the greater Pomp and Solemnity, he mix'd Instruments in Consort with Voices, that so the Congregation might make a *joyful* and *melodious Noise* to the God of their Salvation.

This is that pleasing and delightful Work which this Day is set apart for. Through the good Providence of God we have seen several such joyful Days of late; 'tis no longer ago than the last Spring, that we assembled upon such an Occasion; and as we have now another presented to us, I must bespeak you in those words of the Royal Musician, *O come let us sing unto the Lord a new Song.* 'Tis fit that our Gratitude and Praise should keep Pace with God's Mercies, and that every *new Instance* of his Favour and Goodness should be celebrated with a *new Song*.

2. The other principal way of expressing our Gratitude to God for his late Favours, is by the Virtue and Holiness of our Lives and Conversations. Every instance of God's Goodness is an Argument to lead us to Repentance, and excite us to Obedience; forasmuch as these are things very pleasing and acceptable to him. It's a sign of a very degenerate Temper, when Goodness and Kindness have less force to make Men good, than Severity and Frowns; and when they will not Reform after a Day of *Thanksgiving*, as well as after a *Fast*. Especially will our *Gratitude* appear, by putting away those *Iniquities*, that do in a more especial manner *obstruct* the present Designs of God's Providence; and by the practice of those *Virtues* that have a *peculiar Influence* to promote the same.

same. The Providence of God seems to determine to Humble and Reduce the *French Tyrant*, and to have mark'd out our *Queen* to be the most glorious Instrument of doing it. She has nothing so much at Heart as the accomplishing *this*, for the Repose of *Europe*, as well as of Her own Dominions; and for establishing the *Protestant Interest* at Home and Abroad. And 'tis plain, that nothing can more directly interfere with these Purposes, than *Animosities* and *Divisions* amongst our selves; than a *bitter and uncharitable Spirit*, that splits us into different Interests and Parties, and dashes us one against another, and causes Men to Sacrifice the *Common Interest* to a *Private Resentment*. 'Tis plain, that *Sedition* and *Faction* that flie in the Face of *Majesty*, and misrepresent the *Queens Administration*, with a design to create *Jealousies* and *Disquietudes* in the Minds of Her People, and alienate their Affections from Her: I say 'tis plain, that these Practices *obstruct* the present purposes of *Providence*; they *weaken* us as they *divide* us; they clog the Wheels of Government; they dishearten the *Queen* and Her Allies: And it must needs be a discouragement to our *Generals* and *Officers* to think, that after they have lost Blood and Limbs, and bravely expos'd their Lives to win glorious Victories for us, there should be great Numbers of People that will give them but little Thanks for their Pains, and look ill upon them when they come Home.

On the other hand 'tis as evident, that *Love*, and *Charity*, and *Moderation* towards one another, and *Loyalty* and Affection to the *Queen*, will produce the quite contrary Effects: For by this means we shall

be united and strengthen'd; we shall make the Engine of Government more easily, and we shall strengthen the Hands of the *Queen* and *Her Allies* against the Common Enemy, as well as encourage the Hearts of their Soldiers.

'Tis by putting away those foremention'd *Iniquities* that are so contrary to the Designs of God's good Providence at this time; that are so ungrateful a Return for his late Goodness, and that are withal so opposite to *Christianity* and *Humanity*: And 'tis by the practice of these *seasonable Virtues*, which are always requisite in a good Christian, and a good Subject, but more especially at this time, that we must express our Gratitude, and pay our thankful Acknowledgments to God for those great Successes which he has lately given us. We may Praise him with our Mouths, and make a very pompous show of Devotion, and be Hypocrites when we have done: But when to the Fruit of our Lips we add the Fruits of Virtue and Piety in our Lives; 'tis then only that we shew by *substantial Proofs*, how grateful a Sense we have of God's Goodness towards us.

But have we done enough when we have ascribed the Praise of our late Successes unto God? And is there nothing due to Instruments, to their Wisdom, and Bravery, and Fidelity; did these contribute nothing to Victory? Without doubt they did, and under God there is a great deal of Gratitude and Honour to be paid to them. We own these Victories to be very Providential, and by Divine Favour and Assistance; but yet they were not Miraculous:
Our

Our Enemies were not struck with *Thunder* and *Lightning* as the *Philistines*. They were not cut off by a *destroying Angel*, as the Host of the *Assyrians*. The *Stars* in their Courses did not fight against them, as against *Sisera*; but it was by *humane* Ways and Means, by wise Conduct and Resolution, which God was pleased to assist and over-rule, to a happy Issue. God's agency does not exclude, but commonly supposes the Fitness and Excellency of Instruments: For 'tis not the ordinary Method of Providence to make *Cowards* brave, and *Fools* wise Men; but to improve and assist Mens natural Wisdom and Valour, and render them prosperous. To say otherwise, is to take away all Distinction of Qualifications, and set all Mankind upon the level; 'tis to render Wisdom, and Experience, and Courage, altogether useless and insignificant, and resolve all things into Miracles.

'Tis fit therefore, that after we have ascrib'd, in the first place, Thanksgiving and Praise to Almighty God for these Victories, we should pay due Honour and Acknowledgment to those great Generals the Duke of *Marlborough* and Prince *Eugene*, with all the *brave Commanders* and Soldiers, who under *their* wise Management had a share in the same; for *these* under God and the Queen, who enlivens the whole Confederacy, are the Instruments that wrought *them*; for which not only we, but Posterity shall mention their Names with Honour.

I come now to the Second part of my Text, in those words, *And a two edged Sword in their Hands, to bind their Kings, &c.*

Having been told our Duty, with relation to past Occurrences in the first Clause, we learn from these following ones, both our *Duty* and *Interest*, in regard to the remaining Measures that are to be taken by us ; which is not to *put up the Sword*, as if all was secure and past Danger ; but to hold it still in our *Hand*, and follow our Blow, and improve the Advantage we have gain'd, and the Opportunity which Providence has put into our Hand, for obtaining an honourable and lasting Peace. And

1st. I think it evidentially appears to be our *Duty* to do it ; for we should be wanting to God, to Religion, to our selves, and to our Posterity, if we should neglect so fair an Opportunity as now offers, of humbling a Tyrant, who has extirpated the Protestant Religion, and pure Worship of God out of all his Dominions, by the most barbarous and bloody Methods ; and would act the same Tragedies *here*, if 'twere in his Power : Who has been long grasping at *Universal Monarchy*, has unjustly seiz'd upon the Dominions of Neighbouring Princes, and has at last perfectly impoverish'd his own Subjects, and made a Sacrifice of them to his *disappointed Ambition*. Long has he prosper'd and been the growing Terror of *Europe* ; but now, Thanks be to God, the Scales are turn'd, and the Divine Providence has open'd a fair Prospect to Us, of chastising his Pride and

and Cruelty, and of putting it out of his Power ever more to do us a mischief. If we should neglect this critical Juncture, as we should soon have occasion to repent it our selves, so would Posterity *Curse* us for betraying their Religion, Liberties and Properties, which we had it once in our power to secure

If therefore any regard is to be had to the Honour of God, and Interest of Religion, and Welfare of our Country, if there be any Obligation to preserve our Liberties and Properties, both Sacred and Civil, and to deliver them safe down to Posterity, then is it our Duty to *keep the Sword in our hands*, and prosecute the Advantages we have gain'd, as being the only Opportunity we can promise our selves of doing it.

2ly. Nor is it less our *Interest* to do so, for we have found, by too dear Experience, that we can have no manner of Security till the *French King* is brought so low, that it shall be wholly out of his power to disturb us. We have to our cost learn'd, that the *solemnest Oaths* and *Renunciations*, the most *sacred Covenants* and *Treaties*, can bind him no longer than he sees 'tis for his Interest; we have seen that the Ties of Honour and of Conscience, are of no force and significancy to hold him; shall we then do wisely to trust again to these? Shall we put our *All* upon that desperate hazard? Or will it not be our Wisdom to improve the Advantage we have got, till we shall disarm his Ambition? And, as the Text says, *Bind him in Chains*? That is, put it out of his power

er to interrupt the Common Peace any more, otherwise we are accessory to our own Slavery, and do in effect prepare *Chains* for our selves.

The Queen in her Royal Wisdom, and tender Concern for the lasting Happiness and Security of her People, has declar'd these to be her Sentiments from the Throne ; for in her *Speech* to the Parliament she expresses her self in these words, “ *I hope we*
 “ *are all met together at this time, with serious and*
 “ *steady Resolutions to prosecute the Advantages we have*
 “ *gain'd, till we reap the desired effect of them in an*
 “ *honourable and durable Peace. The Goodness of God*
 “ *has brought this happy prospect so much nearer to us,*
 “ *that if we be not wanting to our selves, we may upon*
 “ *good grounds hope to see such a Balance of Power in*
 “ *Europe, that it shall no longer be at the Pleasure of*
 “ *one Prince to disturb the Repose, and endanger the Li-*
 “ *berties of this part of the World.*

And yet some People are so much out either in their Honesty or Politicks, that nothing but an immediate Peace will serve their turn.

I wish there were no room to think, that the *Leaders* of this Cry have quite another View than those Ignorant People that follow them : I am afraid there is no good Meaning in it, either to the *Present Government*, or to the *Protestant Succession*. There are those amongst us, who are loth that the King of *France* should be brought too low, because it would defeat such Hopes and Prospects as they are pleas'd to entertain, but durst not own. They
 would

would fain have him take breath and recover himself, in expectation that one time or other he may be able to send them help from *St. Germans*. This is the only twig that remains for them to catch hold of, and this they know will be utterly cut off by one such unlucky Blow more as that of *Blenheim* or *Ramellies*.

But there are others who are very warm for a Peace, for no other reason but because they are weary of Taxes, and contributing to the Charges of the War.

But do they not think that other People would be as glad to save their Money as they, and are altogether as weary of the War? Certainly no body loves War for War's sake, but for the sake of Peace, but if we cannot yet obtain such a Peace as shall be advantageous and lasting, we do not obtain the true end for which we are engag'd in War; we shall do just like that foolish Patient, who to save Charges for the present, will have his wound hastily *skinn'd over* before it's thoroughly heal'd at bottom; the consequence of which is, that it festers and gathers again, and breaks out into a worse wound than it was at first, and puts him to twice the Charge it would otherwise have done. We made a dear Experiment of this in the last Peace, every one cry'd to be eas'd of Taxes, and to have an end put to the War, and what was the Consequence? The wound was only *skinn'd over*, we had not patience to have it throughly heal'd when it was in a very fair way for it, and it soon broke out again into a new War,

War, and we pay Taxes to this time for carrying it on.

We have now, by the Goodness of God, a fairer opportunity than ever, to bring the War to a happy Conclusion, and secure our Liberties, and Properties, and Religion, so effectually, that it shall ever after be out of the Power of *France* to endanger them : The difficulty of the Work seems to be conquer'd, and one such *Campaign* more as *this last*, will enable us to make Peace upon what Terms we please.

The best part of the French King's Troops are destroy'd, the rest are dispirited, his Treasure is exhausted, and his Conquests diminish'd, his People murmur, and his Council are embarrass'd; he changes his Generals backwards and forwards, and shifts his Measures like a Man at his Wits end; and if we should neglect this happy opportunity to push things home, if we should fail to bind this strong Man and spoil him of his Arms, now we have him in a manner down, things may take such a Turn that it shall hereafter be out of our Power, and we shall repent when 'tis too late. His Engines have been at work under-hand to set a Peace on foot, that so he may take breath, and recover himself to attack us with more advantage, as he did the last time.

Now therefore is our Opportunity, if we know when to improve it; our ready Contributions at this time may save us many years Taxes, but if our Clamours for Peace should hasten it on too fast, it would be the worst Husbandry in the World, and
for

for the sake of saving a year or two's Taxes at present, we should bring our selves under a necessity of paying them perhaps as long as we live.

Thus have you seen how pertinent the words of the *Psalmist* are to our present Occasion, and how particularly they shew us both our Duty and Interest upon this Day, and at this Critical Juncture.

Let us then possess our hearts with a grateful sense of the great Goodness of God towards us, in giving us such wonderful Success against our Enemies, and in opening to us so comfortable a prospect of an honourable and lasting Peace, if we be not wanting to our selves by neglecting those vigorous Measures that are proper to obtain it. Let us offer up our unfeigned Thanks and Praise to him, with glad Minds, upon this *Joyful Day*, for it is good to sing Praises unto our God, for it is pleasant, and praise is comely.

But especially let us resolve to make him those more substantial and durable Acknowledgments of Virtue and Piety in the following Course of our Lives: Let his Goodness lead us to Repentance and Reformation, and induce us to forsake our wicked Ways, and to turn to him with all our Hearts and Souls: To wash us, and make us clean, and put away the Evil of our Doings, which are so provoking to him. This is that pleasing sort of Gratitude which God will take very kindly at our hands; but if this be wanting, he will despise the empty praise of our Lips, and disdain the formal Pomp and Ceremony of a *Thanksgiving Day*.

D

By

By this means also we may hope to engage the Providence of God to be yet more on our side, and to give us those further Successes and Marks of his favour, which shall make this little Spot the Glory of all Lands, so that our Neighbouring Nations shall with Envy say, *Happy art thou, O Britain, favoured of the Lord.*

We are already become one of the most considerable Nations in the whole World, and 'tis the *second time* we have been so, under the Government of a *Woman*. Our late Sovereign, of *Glorious and Immortal Memory*, laid the Foundation; but the Glory of building it up to this hight, upon the same, was reserv'd for the *Queen*, who has wisely trod in *his* steps, and pursued the Scheme which *he* had form'd; so that the Eyes of all *Europe* are now turn'd upon us, and seem to read their Fate in the Resolutions of our *Queen* and *Parliament*. We rescue *Empires* when the Hand of Violence and Ambition is just grasping them; we Succour *distressed Princes*; we take the Crown off the Heads of *Usurpers*, and restore them to their *Rightful Sovereigns*; and we chastize proud Princes, whose Exorbitant thirst of Power knows no other Bounds than what we set them.

Germany, Spain and Savoy, will make grateful Acknowledgments of the Truth of this, and *France* proves it to her Sorrow. Our Fleets ride in Triumph upon the Ocean as if it was *only their Element*; we send our Treasures as well as our Forces abroad, not poorly to *buy* Towns, and *bribe Princes and Mercenary*

nary Ministers, but to carry on the Common Cause of Liberty. One of these *Great Victories* was gain'd under the Command of an *English General*, and the other by the Assistance of *English Money*: Our Queen is the Head of the Protestant Interest, and of the Grand Alliance; We are renown'd in Arms and Arts, in Wisdom and Wealth; and there is nothing wanting to make us the most glorious Nation in the World, but a greater measure of *Piety* and *Virtue*; this would crown all the rest, and make us a *praise in the whole Earth*. Let us then by this new Instance of God's Goodness, be perswaded to reform every one his Life; let us the rather do it, because this is the best way of returning our Thanks for the same.

And this part of our Gratitude is the more seasonable to be mention'd, as this is the *last Day* of the Year. There's not one of us, but if he looks back upon his Life and Conversation this Year, will see great Occasion for Repentance, great reason to be ashamed that he has lost so much precious Time, and that he has spent so much of it in sinning against God, when in the mean while *his* good Providence was bringing about *Wonders* of Mercy and Kindness for us. Let this Consideration move us to Resolve to put off the *Old Man* of Sin with the *Old Year*, and to begin the *New Year* with a *New Course* of Life, that may redound more to God's Glory, and that may shew a more grateful sense of his Favour. How swiftly did this Year pass over our Heads? How softly is the time stolen from us? And how insensibly are we advanced so much nearer to Death and Eternity? We can tell of Sins enough that we have committed this Year, but what Good have we done?

What

What Service to God, and Religion, and our Generation? What Virtues have we practis'd? What Improvements have we made in Holiness? And what Account can we give to God of these *Twelve Months*? How many are laid in the Dust that's under us, and shut up in the Silent Grave *this Year*? Their accepted Time and Day of Salvation is over; and if they neglected to improve it whilst they liv'd, 'tis now too late for them to do it. And 'tis hardly possible but that some, out of such an Assembly as this, must be laid under these Stones, or under the Neighbouring Turf, before the *New Year* be expired. We may now say, Blessed are our Eyes that we see the Light, and our Ears that we hear the glad Tidings of Salvation, but then our Eyes will be clos'd, and our Ears stopt, and we shall never see more, till the Morning of the Resurrection; nor hear more, till the last Trumpet shall pierce through the ground, and enter our amazed Ears. O that we were wise, and understood this, and would consider our latter End; That we would number our Days, &c. That we would redeem the remainder of our Time, because God only can tell how short it will be.

This will be the Way to make a *double* Improvement of *this Day*, both as 'tis the *last Day* of the Year, and as 'tis a Day of *Thanksgiving*; for as much as by our serious Repentance and Reformation, we shall secure our *future Happiness*, and not only so, but *this* will be the best way of expressing our *Thanks* to God for his late Mercies, and to engage him to bless our Endeavours for restoring a lasting Peace and prosperous Times, which will contribute to our *present Comfort* and *Felicity*. To him be ascribed, &c.

F I N I S.



